

Albert Einstein's quotes regarding Palestine

1921 The opportunity is presented to us of setting up centers of civilization which the whole Jewish people can regard as its work. We nurse the hope of erecting in Palestine a home of our own national culture which shall help to awaken the Near East to new economic and spiritual life.

1921 The object which the leaders of Zionism have before their eyes is not a political but a social and cultural one.

1921 considerable sums have been collected during these months in America, thanks to the indefatigable labors of Professor Weizmann and other Zionist leaders

1921 I conclude with a warm appeal to the Jews in Germany to contribute all they can, in spite of the present economic difficulties, for the building up of the Jewish home in Palestine.

1921 We hope to create in Palestine a homeland of our own national culture that shall contribute to the awakening of new economic and intellectual life in the Near East.

1921 establishment of a Jewish university in Jerusalem is one of the most important aims of the Zionist Organization.

1921 Thanks to the untiring work of Professor Weizmann and other Zionist leaders in America, substantial sums for the latter fund have been brought together in recent months

1921 The founding of a free Jewish community structure in Palestine will again put Jewish people in a position where they can unencumbered fully unfold their creative capabilities.

1921 I am convinced that the work in Palestine will succeed in the sense that we shall create in that country a unified community which

shall be a moral and spiritual center the Jewries of the world.

1929 It was with a wonderful enthusiasm and a deep sense of gratitude that the Jews, afflicted more than any other people by the chaos and horror of the war, obtained from Great Britain a pledge to support the re- establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine.

1929 The Jewish people, beset with a thousand physical wrongs and moral degradations, saw in the British promise the sure rock on which it could re-create a Jewish national life in Palestine, which, by its very existence as well as by its material and intellectual achievements, would give the Jewish masses, dispersed all over the world, a new sense of hope, dignity, and pride.

1929 Within a brief decade some ?10,000,000 were raised by voluntary contributions, and 100,000 hand- picked Jews entered Palestine to redeem by their physical labour the almost derelict land. Deserts were irrigated, forests planted, swamps drained, and their crippling diseases subdued.?

1929 Arab mobs, organised and fanaticised by political intriguers working on the religious fury of the ignorant, attacked scattered Jewish settlements and murdered and plundered wherever no resistance was offered.

1929 When one travels through the country, as I had the good fortune to do a few years ago, and sees young pioneers, men and women of magnificent intellectual and moral calibre, breaking stones and building roads under the blazing rays of the Palestinian sun; when one sees flourishing agricultural settlements shooting up from the long deserted soil under the intensive efforts of the Jewish settlers; when one sees the development of water power and the beginnings of an industry adapted to the needs and possibilities of

the country, and, above all, the growth of an educational system, ranging from the kindergarten to the university, in the language of the Bible – what observer, whatever his origin or faith, can fail to be seized by the magic of such amazing achievement and of such almost superhuman devotion?

1929 What under-lies all these phenomena is the basic fact, which the first Zionists recognised with profound intuition, that the Jewish problem cannot be solved by the assimilation of the individual Jew to his environment. Jewish individuality is too strong to be effaced by such assimilation, and too conscious to be ready for such self effacement.

1929 the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine would raise the status and the dignity of those who would remain in their native countries, and would thereby materially assist in improving the relations between non-Jews and Jews in general.

1929 But Zionism springs from an even deeper motive than Jewish suffering. It is rooted in a Jewish spiritual tradition, whose maintenance and development are for Jews the *raison d'être* of their continued existence as a community.

1929 In the re-establishment of the Jewish nation in the ancient home of the race, where Jewish spiritual values could again be developed in a Jewish atmosphere, the most enlightened representatives of Jewish individuality see the essential preliminary to the regeneration of the race and the setting free of its spiritual creativeness

1929 Zionism is not a movement inspired by chauvinism or by a sacro egoismo. I am convinced that the great majority of the Jews would refuse to support a movement of that kind. Nor does Zionism

aspire to divest anyone in Palestine of any rights or possessions he may enjoy. On the contrary, we are convinced that we shall be able to establish a friendly and constructive co- operation with the kindred Arab race which will be a blessing to both sections of the population materially and spiritually.

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1929 Indeed, one of the most comforting features in the present crisis has been the reports of personal protection afforded by Arabs to their Jewish fellow-citizens against the attacks of the fanaticised mob.

1929 I submit, therefore, that the Zionist movement is entitled, in the name of its higher objectives and on the strength of the support which has been promised to it most solemnly by the civilised world, to demand that its unprecedented reconstructive effort – carried out in a country which still largely lies fallow, and in which, by methods of intensive cultivation such as the Jews have applied, room can be

found for hundreds of thousands of new settlers without detriment to the native population

1929 Is it tolerable that, in a country where ignorant fanaticism can so easily be incited to rapine and murder by interested agitators, so utterly irresponsible and unscrupulous a politician should be enabled to continue to exercise his evil influence, garbed in an the spiritual sanity of religion, and invested with all the temporal powers that this involves in an Eastern country?

1929 Jews do not wish to live in the land of their fathers under the protection of British bayonets: they come as friends of the kindred Arab nation.

1929 I cannot believe that the greatest colonial Power in the world will fail when it is faced with the task of placing its unique colonising experience at the service of the reconstruction of the ancient home of the People of the Bible.

1930 For this reason I should have expected that the great Arab people would show a truer appreciation of the need which the Jews feel to re-build their national home in the ancient seat of Judaism; I should have expected that by common effort ways and means would be found to render possible an extensive Jewish settlement in the country.

1930 I am convinced that the devotion of the Jewish people to Palestine will benefit all the inhabitants of the country, not only materially, but also culturally and nationally. I believe that the Arab renaissance in the vast expanse of territory now occupied by the Arabs stands only to gain from Jewish sympathy.

1930 I believe that the two great Semitic peoples, each of which has in its way contributed something of lasting value to the civilization of the West, may have a great future in common, and that instead of

facing each other with barren enmity and mutual distrust, they should support each other's national and cultural endeavors, and should seek the possibility of sympathetic co-operation.

1930 Embedded in the tradition of the Jewish people there is a love of justice and reason which must continue to work for the good of all nations now and in the future. In modern times this tradition has produced Spinoza and Karl Marx.

1932 A decade or two ago a group of far-sighted men, among whom the unforgettable Herzl stood out above the rest, came to the conclusion that we needed a spiritual center in order to preserve our sense of solidarity in difficult times. Thus arose the idea of Zionism and the work of settlement in Palestine, the successful realization of which we have been permitted to witness, at least in its highly promising beginnings

1932 But the most recent reports show that the world, and especially the British government, is disposed to recognize the great things which lie behind our struggle for the Zionist ideal. Let us at this moment remember with gratitude our leader Weizmann, whose zeal and circumspection helped the good cause to success.

1932 It has been dearly proclaimed that we are not seeking to create a political society, but that our aim is, in accordance with the old tradition of Jewry, a cultural one in the widest sense of the world.

1932 Whatever we do for Palestine, we do it for the honor and well-being of the whole Jewish people.

1932 Ten years ago, when I first had the pleasure of addressing you in behalf of the Zionist cause, almost all our hopes were still fixed on the future. Today we can look back on these ten years with joy; for

in that time the united energies of the Jewish people have accomplished a piece of splendidly successful, constructive work in Palestine, which certainly exceeds anything that we dared then to hope for.

1932 The latest pronouncements of the British government indicate a return to a juster judgment of our case; this we recognize with gratitude.

1932 But we must never forget what this crisis has taught usnamely, that the establishment of satisfactory relations between the Jews and the Arabs is not England's affair but ours. We- that is to say, the Arabs and ourselves-have got to agree on the main outlines of an advantageous partnership which shall satisfy the needs of both nations

1932 Remember that Switzerland represents a higher stage of political development than any national state, precisely because of the greater political problems which had to be solved before a stable community could be built up out of groups of different nationality.

1932 Much remains to be done, but one at least of Herzl's aims has already been realized: the Palestine job has given the Jewish people an astonishing degree of solidarity and the optimism without which no organism can lead a healthy life. Anything we may do for the common purpose is done not merely for our brothers in Palestine but for the well-being and honor of the whole Jewish people.

1933 For us Jews, Palestine is not just a charitahle or colonial enterprise, but a problem of central importance for the Jewish people. Palestine is not primarily a place of refuge for the Jews of Eastern Europe but the embodiment of the re-awakening corporate spirit of the whole Jewish nation.

1933 At the same time they imitated the external forms of Gentile life, departed more and more from their religious and social traditions, and adopted Gentile customs, manners, and habits of thought. It seemed as though they were completely losing their identity in the superior numbers and more highly organized culture of the nations among whom they lived, so that in a few generations there would be no trace of them left. A complete disappearance of Jewish nationality in Central and Western Europe seemed inevitable.

1933 The first step in that direction is that we Jews should once more become conscious of our existence as a nationality and regain the self-respect that is necessary to a healthy existence. We must learn once more to glory in our ancestors and our history and once again take upon ourselves, as a nation, cultural tasks of a sort calculated to strengthen our sense of the community.

1933 It is from this point of view that I would have you look at the Zionist movement. Today history has assigned to us the task of taking an active part in the economic and cultural reconstruction of our native land. Enthusiasts, men of brilliant gifts, have cleared the way, and many excellent members of our race are prepared to devote themselves heart and soul to the cause. May everyone of them fully realize the importance of this work and contribute, according to his powers, to its success.

1934 How strongly developed this sense of the sanctity of life is in the Jewish people is admirably illustrated by a little remark which Walter Rathenau once made to me in conversation: "When a Jew says that he's going hunting to amuse himself, he lies. The Jewish sense of the sanctity of life could not be more simply expressed.

1934 In this case, as in many mental disorders, the cure lies in a clear knowledge of one's condition and its causes. We must be conscious of our alien race and draw the logical conclusions from it.

It is no use trying to convince the others of our spiritual and intellectual equality by arguments addressed to the reason, when the attitude of these others does not originate in their intellects at all. Rather must we emancipate ourselves socially, and supply our social needs, in the main, ourselves. We must have our own students' societies and adopt an attitude of courteous but consistent reserve to the Gentiles. And let us live after our own fashion there and not ape dueling and drinking customs which are foreign to our nature. It is possible to be a civilized European and a good citizen and at the same time a faithful Jew who loves his race and honors his fathers. If we remember this and act accordingly, the problem of anti-Semitism, in so far as it is of a social nature, is solved for us.

1934 Those who are raging today against the ideals of reason and individual liberty and are trying to establish a spiritless state-slavery by brute force rightly see in us their irreconcilable foes. History has given us a difficult row to hoe; but so long as we remain devoted servants of truth, justice, and liberty, we shall continue not merely to survive as the oldest of living peoples, but by creative work to bring forth fruits which contribute to the ennoblement of the human race, as heretofore.

1934 The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, an almost fanatical love of justice and the desire for personal independence these are the features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my stars that I belong to it.

1934 A revival of Jewish national life, such as the last generation could never have dreamed of, has begun. Through the operation of a newly awakened sense of solidarity among the Jews, the scheme of colonizing Palestine, launched by a handful of devoted and judicious leaders in the face of apparently insuperable difficulty, has already prospered so far that I feel no doubt about its permanent success.

The value of this achievement for the Jews everywhere is very great. Palestine will be a center of culture for all Jews, a refuge for the most grievously oppressed, a field of action for the best among us, a unifying ideal, and a means of attaining inward health for the Jews of the whole world.

1934 Among Zionist organizations "Working Palestine" is the one whose work is of most direct benefit to the most valuable class of people living there, namely, those who are transforming deserts into flourishing settlements by the labor of their hands. These workers are a selection, made on the voluntary basis, from the whole Jewish nation, an elite composed of strong, confident, and unselfish people.

1934 They are not ignorant laborers who sell the labor of their hands to the highest bidder, but educated, intellectually vigorous, free men, from whose peaceful struggle with a neglected soil the whole Jewish nation are the gainers, directly and indirectly.

1934 It is, moreover, this working class alone that has the power to establish healthy relations with the Arabs, which is the most important political task of Zionism.

1934 I have read your article on Zionism and the Zurich Congress and feel as a strong devotee of the Zionist idea, that I must answer you, even if only shortly. The Jews are a community bound together by ties of blood and tradition, and not of religion only: the attitude of the rest of the world toward them is sufficient proof of this. When I came to Germany fifteen years ago I discovered for the first time that I was a Jew, and I owe this discovery more to Gentiles than Jews.

1934 Then I realized that only a common enterprise dear to the heart of Jews all over the world could restore this people to health.

It was a great achievement of Herzl's to have realized and proclaimed at the top of his voice that, the traditional attitude of the Jews being what it was, the establishment of a national home or, more accurately, a center in Palestine, was a suitable object on which to concentrate our efforts.

1934 All this you call nationalism, and there is something in the accusation. But a communal purpose without which we can neither live nor die in this hostile world can always be called by that ugly name. In any case it is a nationalism whose aim is not power but dignity and health. If we did not have to live among intolerant, narrow-minded, and violent people, I should be the first to throw over all nationalism in favor of universal humanity.

1934 The objection that we Jews cannot be proper citizens of the German state, for example, if we want to be a "nation" is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the state which springs from the intolerance of national majorities. Against that intolerance we shall never be safe, whether we call ourselves a people (or nation) or not. I have put all this with brutal frankness for the sake of brevity, but I know from your writings that you are a man who stands to the sense, not the form.

1938 For today every Jew feels that to be a Jew means to bear a serious responsibility not only to his own community, but also toward humanity. To be a Jew, after all, means first of all, to acknowledge and follow in practice those fundamentals in humaneness laid down in the Bible-fundamentals without which no sound and happy country of men can exist.

1938 We meet today because of our concern for the development of Palestine. In this hour one thing, above all, must be emphasized: Judaism owes a great debt of gratitude to Zionism. The Zionist movement has revived among Jews the sense of community. It has

performed productive work surpassing all the expectations anyone could entertain. This productive work in Palestine, to which self-sacrificing Jews throughout the world have contributed, has saved a large number of our brethren from direst need. In particular, it has been possible to lead a not inconsiderable part of our youth toward a life of joyous and creative work.

1938 Now the fateful disease of our time-exaggerated nationalism, borne up by blind hatred-has brought our work in Palestine to a most difficult stage. Fields cultivated by day must have armed protection at night against fanatical Arab outlaws. All economic life suffers from insecurity. The spirit of enterprise languishes and a certain measure of unemployment (modest when measured by American standards) has made its appearance.

1938 The solidarity and confidence with which our brethren in Palestine face these difficulties deserve our admiration. Voluntary contributions by those still employed keep the unemployed above water. Spirits remain high, in the conviction that reason and calm will ultimately reassert themselves. Everyone knows that the riots are artificially fomented by those directly interested in embarrassing not only ourselves but especially England. Everyone knows that banditry would cease if foreign subsidies were withdrawn.

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1938 Just one more personal word on the question of partition. I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. Apart from practical consideration, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an

army, and a measure of temporal power no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain-especially from the development of a narrow nationalism within our own ranks, against which we have already , had to fight strongly, even without a Jewish state.

1939 In the past we were persecuted despite the fact that we were the people of the Bible; today, however, it is just because we are the people of the Book that we are persecuted. The aim is to exterminate not only ourselves but to destroy, together with us, that spirit expressed in the Bible and in Christianity which made possible the rise of civilization in Central and Northern Europe. If this aim is achieved, Europe will become a barren waste. For human community life cannot long endure on a basis of crude force, brutality, terror, and hate.

1939 The power of resistance which has enabled the Jewish people to survive for thousands of years is a direct outgrowth of Jewish adherence to the Biblical doctrines on the relationships among men. In these years of affliction our readiness to help one another is being put to an especially severe test. Each of us must personally face this test, that we may stand it as well as our fathers did before us. We have no other means of self defense than our solidarity and our knowledge that the cause for which we are suffering is a momentous and sacred cause.

1947 Those with a sense of history-and I know how eloquently you have written on this theme-could not fail to be aware of the dramatic coincidence by which the plea of the Jewish people for equality was being heard by the UN at the very time when a revolutionary measure of redemption was being passed in your country.

1947 And because you have been the consistent champion of the forces of political and economic enlightenment in the Orient, I address myself to you in regard to the rights of an ancient people whose roots are in the East.

1947 I should like to discuss only one problem with you-the ethical issues involved in the Zionist effort to recreate a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

1947 However, I shall not pretend to misunderstand the nature of Arab opposition. Though the Arab of Palestine has benefited physically and economically, he wants exclusive national sovereignty, such as enjoyed by the Arabs of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon or Syria. It is a legitimate and natural desire, and justice would seem to call for its satisfaction. At the close of world war 1, 99% of the vast, underpopulated territories liberated from the Turks by the Allies were set aside for the national aspirations of the Arabs. Five independent Arab states have since been established in these territories. Only 1% was reserved for the Jewish people in the land of their origin.

1947 The legal aspects of the question, the precise commitments contained in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, are not the elements I propose to stress, though I appreciate their significance.

1947 Long before the emergence of Hitler, I made the cause of Zionism mine because through it I saw a means of correcting a flagrant wrong.

1947 Jews have been persecuted as individuals; the Jewish people has been unable to develop fruitfully as a cultural and ethnic group. The spirit of the people as well as the bodies of its members have been assailed. Zionism offered the means of ending this discrimination.

1947 Through the return to the land to which they were bound by close historic ties, and, since the dispersion, hallowed in their daily prayers, Jews sought to abolish their pariah status among peoples.

1947 The Advent of Hitler underscored with a savage logic all the disastrous implications contained in the abnormal situation in which Jews found themselves. Millions of Jews perished not only because they were caught in the Nazi murder machine but also because there was no spot on the globe where they could find sanctuary. I need not remind you what the Nazi extermination program cost my people, nor of the tragic plight of the survivors.

1947 he Jewish survivors demand the right to dwell amid brothers, on the soil of their fathers. Their need is so desperate, their longing so natural that it is superfluous to elaborate the point.

1947 There is, however, a legitimate and relevant question which must be answered. Can Jewish need, no matter how acute, be met without the infringement of the vital rights of others? My answer is in the affirmative.

1947 One of the most extraordinary features of the Jewish rebuilding of Palestine is that the influx of Jewish pioneers has resulted not in the displacement and impoverishment of the local Arab population, but in its phenomenal increase and greater prosperity.

1947 There has been much talk lately of a Zionist "invasion". Surely, a consideration of the facts must reveal how irresponsible and dishonest is such an accusation. Jews settled in Palestine on the basis of international agreements entered into by Arabs as well as the nations of the world. They bought every inch of the land on which they settled. Furthermore, and most important for this phase of the argument, the Arab population of Palestine doubled in size

since the Balfour Declaration, whereas in the adjoining independent Arab states, the population remained static. Jewish colonization has not only raised the standard of life and the wage level of the Palestinian Arab, it has the highest rate of natural (population) increase in the world. This hardly constitutes "invasion".

1947 The decision which led to the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration was not arbitrary, nor the choice of territory capricious. It took into account the needs and aspirations of both Arab and Jew, and certainly, the lion's share did not fall to the Jews. In the august scale of justice, which weighs need against need, there is not doubt as to whose is more heavy. The "small notch" in the land of their fathers, granted the Jewish people, somewhat redresses the balance.

1947 I believe there is still another factor which must weigh heavily in any consideration of the Zionist case, namely what Jews have actually in Palestine, and the fashion of their accomplishment. I find profoundly gratifying the fact that the reconstruction of Palestine has taken not through the exploitation of native workers-the usual pattern of imperialism-but through the heroic toil of Jewish pioneers. The once malaria-ridden swamps, the stony mountain slopes, the salt shores of the Dead Sea, now fertile and blooming, are evidence of a creative impulse whose thwarting would make mankind, as well as Jew and Arab, the poorer. Jewish labor has created living space; it has made Palestine bigger, and the world richer. Nor can I ignore the new concepts of economic equality which Jewish workers have brought to the Middle East. Their network of flourishing cooperatives, their vigorous trade-union movement, are token of a social idealism which is an organic part of their striving for national regeneration. Through the force of this social vision, both Arab and Jew will go forward.

1947 I know that the rivalries of power politics and the egotism of

petty nationalist appetites seek to stifle the glorious renaissance which has begun in Palestine. May I appeal to you, as the leader of a movement of social and national enfranchisement, to recognize in Zionism a similar movement whose realization will add to the peace and progress of the Orient. Free Jewish immigration to Palestine, and the right of the Jews to continue the upholding of their ancient homeland without artificial restrictions, will increase the sum of well being in the world. It is time to make an end to the ghetto status of Jews in Palestine, and to the pariah status of Jews among peoples. I trust that you, who so badly have struggled for freedom and justice, will place your great influence on behalf of the claim for justice made by the people who for so long and so dreadfully have suffered from its denial.

1949 There is no problem of such ovenvhelming importance to us Jews as consolidating that which has been accomplished in Israel with amazing energy and an unequaled willingness for sacrifice. May the joy and admiration that fill us when we think of all that this small group of energetic and thoughtful people has achieved give us the strength to accept the great responsibility which the present situation has placed upon us.

1949 When appraising the achievement, however, let us not lose sight of the cause to be served by this achievement: rescue of our endangered brethren, dispersed in many lands, by uniting them in Israel; creation of a community which conforms as closely as possible to the ethical ideals of our people as they have been formed in the course of a long history.

1949 One of these ideals is peace, based on understanding and self-restraint, and not on violence. If we are imbued with this ideal, our joy becomes somewhat mingled with sadness, because our relations with the Arabs are far from this ideal at the present time. It may

well be that we would have reached this ideal, had we been permitted to work out, undisturbed by others, our relations with our neighbors, for we want peace and we realize that our future development depends on peace.

1949 It was much less our own fault or that of our neighbors than of the Mandatory Power that we did not achieve an undivided Palestine in which Jews and Arabs would live as equals, free, in peace. If one nation dominates other nations, as was the case in the British Mandate over Palestine, she can hardly avoid following the notorious device of Divide et Impera. In plain language this means: create discord among the governed people so they will not unite in order to shake off the yoke imposed upon them. Well, the yoke has been removed, but the seed of dissension has borne fruit and may still do harm for some time to come-let us hope not for too long.

1949 The Jews of Palestine did not fight for political independence for its own sake, but they fought to achieve free immigration for the Jews of many countries where their very existence was in danger; free immigration also for all those who were longing for a life among their own. It is no exaggeration to say that they fought to make possible a sacrifice perhaps unique in history. I do not speak of the loss in lives and property fighting an opponent who was numerically far superior, nor do I mean the exhausting toil which is the pioneer's lot in a neglected arid country.

1949 I am thinking of the additional sacrifice that a population living under such conditions has to make in order to receive, in the course of eighteen months, an influx of immigrants who comprise more than one-third of the total Jewish population of the country. In order to realize what this means you have only to visualize a comparable feat of the American Jews.

1949 Let us assume there were no laws limiting the immigration

into the United States; imagine that the Jews of this country volunteered to receive more than one million Jews from other countries in the course of one year and a half, to take care of them, and to integrate them into the economy of this country. This would be a tremendous achievement, but still very far from the achievement of our brethren in Israel. For the United States is a big, fertile country, sparsely populated, with a high living standard and a highly developed productive capacity, not to compare with small Jewish Palestine whose inhabitants, even without the additional burden of mass immigration, lead a hard and frugal life, still threatened by enemy attacks. Think of the privations and personal sacrifices which this voluntary act of brotherly love means for the Jews of Israel.

1949 The economic means of the Jewish Community in Israel do not suffice to bring this tremendous enterprise to a successful end. For a hundred thousand out of more than three hundred thousand persons who immigrated to Israel since May, 1948, no homes or work could be made available. They had to be concentrated in improvised camps under conditions which are a disgrace to all of us.

1949 It must not happen that this magnificent work breaks down because the Jews of this country do not help sufficiently or quickly enough. Here, to my mind, is a precious gift with which all Jews have been presented: the opportunity to take an active part in this wonderful task.

1949 From a radio broadcast for the United Jewish Appeal, November 27, 1949.